



School2Home
A Big Idea That Works
November 2013



School2Home is a statewide cost-effective initiative to close both the Achievement Gap and Digital Divide by integrating computing and broadband technologies into the teaching and learning in low-performing middle schools in California with an intense focus on parent engagement and education. School2Home provides the essential framework anchored in best practices to turn around low-performing schools and the requisite platform to support Common Core Standards, innovative pedagogy, or other school-improvement initiatives. School2Home is a partnership planned with purpose in collaboration with districts and schools.

Once School2Home has been fully implemented into all grades such that the culture of using technology to engage parents and drive education improvement has been “rooted”, participating schools are showing significant gains in academic performance that outpace comparable schools and exceed district and statewide averages. Further, this true partnership to optimize parent engagement results in the computing devices being used daily by teachers and students, valued by families, and conscientiously cared for to minimize loss (usually no more than with textbooks).



Closing the Achievement Gap and the Digital Divide in California

School2Home is an innovative statewide program to close both the Achievement Gap and the Digital Divide by integrating the use of broadband-enabled computing technologies into the teaching and learning processes coupled with significant parent engagement at low-performing middle schools throughout California. School2Home has two major goals:

- To increase student achievement at low-performing middle schools in California to help close the Achievement Gap.
- To increase the adoption of computing skills and broadband service by the families of underserved middle school students to help close the Digital Divide.

Essential Framework to Turn Around Low-Performing Schools: 10 Core Components

School2Home supports school districts, administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and community leaders who are committed to improving the academic performance for all students and ensuring they have the essential skills to succeed in a digital economy. It is anchored in extensive analysis of successful technology programs, research on effective parent engagement, and best practices to improve schools. School2Home has 10 Core Components:

- **Planning, Assessment, and School Leadership:** A School Leadership Team is formed to develop a work plan and oversee implementation of School2Home.
- **Technology Bundles for Students and Teachers:** All students receive a computing device to use in the classroom and at home with their families. All teachers receive a device as well.
- **Teacher Professional Development:** Teachers receive 24 hours of professional development on integrating technology and project-based learning into classroom instruction and homework, and using the technology to engage parents and sustain their involvement in education.
- **Teacher Coaching and Mentoring:** Technology coaches and subject-focused champions are designated and supported to provide embedded professional development to their peers.
- **Parent Engagement and Education:** Parents receive 6 hours of training on basic digital literacy, online safety, communicating with the school, and supporting their child's education.
- **Student Tech Expert Development:** Students are recruited and trained to help provide basic school-site technical support to other students, teachers, and families.
- **On-Line Resources:** The School2Home website provides support and assistance to teachers for lesson preparation and to parents to engage with schools and acquire digital skills.
- **Learning Academies:** Principals and teachers participate in workshops and online learning communities to share best practices and learn from one another.
- **Affordable Home Internet Access:** Information about affordable broadband service offers and availability of public broadband access centers is shared with the parents.
- **Evaluation:** A comprehensive annual evaluation process provides feedback schools for accountability and input to program managers for continuous improvement of School2Home.

Requisite Platform for Innovative Pedagogy and Common Core Standards

All school-improvement initiatives and innovative pedagogy—project-based learning, blended learning, online courses, and individualized learning—as well as implementation of Common Core Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessments are supported and optimized with School2Home.

Effective Strategy to Increase Broadband Adoption in Low-Income Neighborhoods

School2Home not only is improving academic performance above district and statewide gains, but it also is driving broadband adoption: Spanish-speaking parents increased broadband adoption at home from 48% to 76% (a 58% increase) and English-speaking parents increased broadband adoption from 84% to 94% (a 12% increase). School2Home permanently closes the Digital Divide.

A Strategic and Wise Investment in the Future

The California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) committed \$7 million to develop and implement School2Home, currently in 10 schools and planning to implement in 12 more. CETF provides 20% funding and works with schools to secure the balance. CETF seeks strategic investment partners.



Evaluation Report for 2012-2013 Executive Summary

Introduction

School2Home is an innovative statewide program designed to close both the Achievement Gap and the Digital Divide by integrating the use of computing and broadband technologies into teaching and learning at low-performing middle schools throughout California. By focusing on these schools, School2Home reaches students who are statistically less likely to perform well in school and more likely to lack access to digital tools than their peers in high-performing schools. School2Home is sponsored and managed by the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) and is implemented in collaboration with local district and school leadership. School2Home provides a systemic approach to improve education that builds on principal leadership with teacher professional development to infuse technology into the classroom as well as increase parent engagement in low-income communities where the majority of parents have not been involved in the school-life of their children and have not had access to broadband.

Problem and Significance

Research has shown that increased parent involvement is largely a function of the extent to which administrators and teachers know how to involve parents and how to provide families with easy access to student information with an improved understanding about instruction and assessment. Therefore, effective family and community engagement requires a two-pronged approach to partnering with districts and schools: (a) training and coaching of principals and teachers to involve parents effectively and consistently in supporting student learning and engagement in school; and (b) direct digital literacy training with follow-up for parents on how to collaborate with teachers, find instructionally-relevant online resources, access student assessment information, and utilize technology applications in support of their child's learning.

Approach and Goals

School2Home is the only initiative in California with a major focus on such extensive parent engagement coupled to the use of educational technology to turn around low-performing schools. An exceptional aspect of School2Home is the focus on using current and emerging technology as a tool for augmenting and enabling increased parent involvement with their child's education. Linking parent and community engagement with technology tools in the learning environment is an essential strategy for turning around low-performing schools. The primary goals are:

- To increase student achievement at low-performing middle schools in California to help close the Achievement Gap.
- To increase the adoption of computing skills and broadband service by the families of underserved middle school students to help close the Digital Divide.

Significant Results to Date

School2Home was implemented in 7 schools in 2012-2013: 3 schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD); 2 schools in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD); and 2 schools in Riverside Unified School District (RUSD). Among the 7 schools, approximately 160 teachers and 3,800 students and families participated. The schools each have high levels of poverty among their families and are primarily serving ethnic minority populations. All schools have been in Program Improvement status for five years or longer.

Expanded Use of Technology for Learning

Responses from 1,410 students to the annual School2Home Student Survey showed:

- 76% increased computer and Internet access at home to support learning.
- 76% use the technology for writing assignments, up from 60% in 2011-2012.
- 86% access the Internet for research related to school work, up from 68% in 2011-2012.

Increased Home Access to the Internet

Responses to the annual School2Home Parent Survey (504 English and 66 Spanish) showed:

- School2Home is narrowing the gap for Internet access in the home between English-speaking and Spanish-speaking families, from 36 percentage points to 18 percentage points.
- Spanish-speaking parents showed a 58% increase in home broadband adoption in one year.
- Broadband adoption grew for English-speaking families from 84% to 94% (a 12% increase) and for Spanish speaking families from 48% to 76% (a 58% increase).
- 78% of the parents are communicating with their schools about student performance and supporting their child's learning at home.

Improved Academic Performance

- Three schools (Melrose in OUSD, Stevenson and Muir in LAUSD) met or exceeded their Academic Performance Index (API) target for 2013.
- A major success at Stevenson, which was one of the lowest-performing schools in LAUSD when School2Home began, was the API gain of 35 points in 2011-2012. Progress continued in 2012-2013, with a 17-point gain, outperforming the LAUSD average (3 points API growth).
- Three schools (Melrose and Frick in OUSD, Muir in LAUSD) showed gains in Language Arts on the California Standards Test (CST) while comparable schools in the state showed significant declines in CST Language Arts.
- Two schools (Chemawa and Central in RUSD) both saw slight declines in 8th grade CST Language Arts, while comparable schools saw significant declines in their scores. However, Chemawa and Central were among the highest performing middle schools in the county.

School administrators participating in School2Home praise the parent component. One principal stated, *"The parent program is one of the distinguishing features because no other program offers such a comprehensive training so closely integrated to other activities in the school."*

School2Home is a Cost-Effective Investment

Implementation costs for School2Home are about \$1,000 per student. This is in contrast to other middle school turn-around programs funded through federal School Improvement Grants (SIG) which average \$1,710 per student (Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences). Once School2Home is fully implemented in all grades in a school and the culture of using technology is "rooted" to engage parents and drive improvement in academic achievement, School2Home is sustainable from existing school resources. Further, this true partnership with local districts and schools to optimize parent engagement results in the computing devices being used daily in classrooms by teachers and students, valued by families, and conscientiously cared for to minimize loss (usually no more than for actual textbooks). Thus, School2Home is a very cost-effective investment to help close both the Achievement Gap and Digital Divide.

School2Home Supports Implementation of Common Core Standards

California's implementation of the Common Core Standards includes participation in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), a national initiative involving students taking academic assessments online with results available to parents. This requires that students have access to computing devices and that all schools (and all classrooms) are broadband-enabled with the kind of framework provided by School2Home. An important opportunity as a result of SBAC is teaching parents how to get to and interpret student assessment data, grades, assignments, and other information about their child online. School2Home is the platform for accomplishing that objective. Finally, the rapid increase in parent and child access to and use of mobile technologies connected to the Internet adds more opportunities for involvement of parents in schools with the support and training offered by CETF and School2Home.

School2Home evaluation is conducted by independent professional evaluators Education Support Systems. The complete Evaluation Report is available upon request and online (www.School2Home).



School2Home

An Important Resource in Implementation of Common Core State Standards

Student academic achievement is greatly increased when parents are able to support their children during their educational process and can actively participate in the various programs offered at each school. This is especially true when planning and implementing a new major initiative such as the *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) and related computer assisted assessment system planned and initiated by the *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium* (SBAC). The parents and community at large must have an appreciation and understanding of the new program to be able to support teachers in their efforts to implement changes in student work assignments, expectations, and new student performance assessments resulting from CCSS implementation.

Research has shown that parent involvement is one of the most important variables that effects the implementation and success of any school program. Due to challenging work schedules, lack of familiarity with the educational system and language barriers, effective parent engagement is especially challenging at the numerous low-performing schools often located in underserved communities. For the past five years, School2Home has been developed and funded by the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) as well as matching funds from school districts and a variety of other grant programs with the purpose of closing both the Achievement Gap and the Digital Divide by integrating the use of technology into teaching and learning at low-performing middle schools throughout California. School2Home provides the essential framework anchored in best practices to turn around low-performing schools and the requisite platform to support Common Core Standards, innovative pedagogy, or other school-improvement initiatives. School2Home focuses on increasing parent engagement in student learning, improving teacher to parent communications, increasing student achievement motivation, and helping parents to understand student academic and behavioral performance assessments and to learn how the use of technology at home and school supports learning. School2Home is planned in collaboration with districts and schools.

The following is a brief description of the major School2Home activities that could directly and indirectly support the planning and implementation of CCSS and the related computer assisted assessment system:

- **Inform parents about the Common Core Standards:** School2Home can incorporate into its parent training program information from the *CCSS Leadership Planning Guide*, recently developed with input from the California State PTA, California School Boards Association, Californians Together, California State Board of Education, California Department of Education and the Common Core Guide for Parents.
- **Help parents understand the new Smarter Balanced Assessments:** School2Home can provide training and follow-up assistance for parents on understanding the new computer-based formative and summative student performance assessments and the implications for ways that parents can help students with home assignments.
- **Facilitate parents getting involved with their children's school program:** School2Home can provide information for parents on how to work with the school as a volunteer in ways that keep them connected the most educationally relevant school activities and how to connect on-line to school and teacher website.
- **Involve parents in school level planning for CCSS:** School2Home can assist schools establish a core leadership team that includes parents to participate in CCSS related site planning. School2Home can work with the school leadership team and help facilitate the planning process. The facilitation of forming and leading a school leadership team is a core component of School2Home.
- **Help schools plan for technology use to support CCSS:** School2Home can support the school leadership team in planning to incorporate the use of computers, netbooks or tablets to support teaching and learning aligned with CCSS.
- **Help parents judge student performance beyond test scores:** School2Home can assist schools in introducing parents to the assessment process. A major objective for CCSS is to move to assessing student work according to their capacity to apply learning to the completion of projects and higher order problem solving. Parents need training to understand this approach and its value.

- **Provide ongoing updates for parents:** School2Home can provide updates on new and emerging CCSS developments, especially as updates are relevant to actions that parents can take.
- **Provide information about digital resources appropriate to home use:** School2Home can inform and support home use of electronic learning resources and online courses appropriate for home use that support CCSS. Parent workshops provide information about affordable Internet access and teach them how to find information in Spanish and English on the School2Home website.
- **Have parents share home-based instructional activities:** School2Home can facilitate workshops for parents to share information and activities they find useful in supporting student learning and motivation.
- **Use the technology to facilitate school to home communication:** School2Home can provide the training and support to enable increased and ongoing communications between teachers and parents with examples of effective practices. A component of the School2Home parent workshops teaches parents how to access attendance and progress information about their child through the district's parent portal. The School2Home professional development encourages teachers to leverage the access to technology to increase their level of communication with parents who would otherwise not be able to meet with teachers due to restrictive work schedules.
- **Provide teachers with professional development and coaching:** School2Home can provide training and ongoing support for teachers on instructional use of CCSS aligned digital resources and how to adapt such resources to meet local needs of their students. The 24 hours of School2Home professional development prepares teachers to engage students in a technology-rich environment during and after school hours with a focus on increased academic achievement.
- **Provide support and resources to enable students to acquire 21st century skills:** School2Home can help schools engage students in the program to develop deeper technology expertise and problem solving skills. They will be more competent and comfortable using computers and more prepared to use computers during the SBAC testing.
- **Identify CCSS aligned technology applications and instructional resources with documented promise of effectiveness:** School2Home collaborates with other services that review instructional resources such as the California Learning Resource Network (CLRN) and links to the best resources through the School2Home website.
- **Provide parents and teachers with information regarding appropriate safe use of the Internet:** School2Home has a component of professional development that relates to Internet safety for students with advice to parents and teachers. School2Home parent workshops address Internet safety and the promotion of good digital citizenship.
- **Assist parents in using the new CCSS student performance report cards:** School2Home can work with the district to communicate to parents about how to interpret the new CCSS reports, which may contain over 30 categories of information about their children's learning and school behavior related to the new standards.
- **Serve as a partner agency with the school district:** School2Home can be the primary resource to the school district in facilitating and helping maintain the technology and parent involvement component of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and CCSS implementation plans.
- **Provide School2Home Learning Academies:** School2Home emphasizes peer support through learning communities and has developed Learning Academies and online learning for leadership teams to share best CCSS and parent engagement practices and learn from one another.
- **Provide for external evaluation to document implementation:** School2Home provides for an external evaluation to determine level of implementation of program components, level of use of each component, impact of School2Home on parent involvement, use of technology to support instruction and learning, and to inform changes needed to potentially improve effectiveness.